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Congo News Letter

OCTOBER
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A DREAM COMES TRUE

August 14! What of August 14th? Yes, it was a day of anxiety over the world as people began to see the realization of their prayers and dreams of many months — the end of the great global conflict. Yes, it was the completion of one battle but the beginning of another--of a different type! This day is one to be long remembered by a young Christian who set foot on Congo soil to begin his campaign in that ongoing fight against fear, superstition and paganism to which he had been called by the King of Kings.

On this day, the days of preparation, the weeks, which finally developed into months, of waiting and anxiety were behind. Many times he dreamed of the time when his hopes would be realized. Equally as many times it had seemed that final word would never come. Having decided to proceed alone, leaving his wife and two young sons to follow later when the way opened, the uncertainty made the period of waiting more difficult. But at last, the days of "suitcase living" finally came to an end—the expected word came, goodbyes were said and what a joy it was, when, on July 14th New York City was left behind. Then followed days of rich spiritual fellowship with five other missionary passengers.

On the first morning at sea, Sunday morning, the writer was on deck to watch his first Sunrise over the ocean. As the sun tried hard to break through a cloud on the horizon, the thought came that there before him was symbolized one aspect of the work which was to be undertaken: that there are apt to be dark clouds on the horizon which for a time may conceal the sunlight but eventually the sun will prevail. It was also symbolic of the way in which the Sun of Righteousness tries hard to penetrate the clouds of sin and unrighteousness, but Who in the end shines forth in all His glory.

And so, one month after leaving New York, as day dawned, we entered the Congo and I caught my first glimpse of the country of my adoption. The trip up the Congo River showed dry, barren and rocky hillsides. Realizing that it is the dry season I was not surprised to see vegetation this way. But the rocks! As I have seen these while coming up the river, later on a motor boat trip to Lualunga, along the railroad, and even at Banza Manteke, I thought how Jesus' parable of the wheat falling on rocky soil should have fertile soil here and should be within the comprehension of those who have such rocks to contend with. And then there are the dry hilltops on which it is difficult to have gardens. Certainly from the way the native African seeks the valleys and places along the streams for his garden it should not be difficult for him to understand Lot's choice (*Gen.* 13:10) in which he chose the well watered valley of the Jordan River, (although perhaps blinding him to the character insights in that story). Yet it is surprising how quickly the green blades of grass begin to spring up, on the burned-over hillsides, with the first one or two brief rains which have already come.

Although my departure for Banza Manteke was delayed three days due to the unfortunate combination of a State holiday the day after my arrival at Matadi, followed immediately by two V-J days, I finally arrived within sight of B.M. It was indeed a thrill to begin to see the fulfilment of a dream of many months. As we arrived on the station, there was the hospital, the missionary homes, the workshops, and through the trees, the church and the school. Although by now they have become familiar sights, the impression of a beautiful layout, indicating careful and thoughtful planning, will long be in my memory. The warm and whole hearted welcome of dark-skinned Christian brothers, was a testimony to the power and love of God, as well as to the tireless labors of older missionaries. To at last become personally acquainted with those native leaders about whom I had heard from retired missionaries or co-workers at home on furlough, and with new co-workers on the field, was also a great experience. Especially appreciated was the wish expressed by many that my family could have enioyed this new experience with me.

A few days' trip to Leopoldville, with stop-offs at Sona Bata and Kimpese gave a fleeting picture of the work of our lower river stations. This trip was interesting even if I did arrive at Sona Bata unannounced due to a miscarriage of the mail and was put to work by Elmer Hall for part of my stay at Kimpese. Nevertheless, one could not help but feel the warm welcome at all places. Although the train running from Matadi to Leo is not like the streamliners seen on some of the railroads in the States, and despite the fact that part of the train is made up of thru freight cars, the equipment is no worse than much of that seen in use in the States the past 2 or 3 years. Furthermore, the one train a day in each direction, seems to run pretty much on schedule.

An early insight into the life and problems of the native church was experienced by attending a Matondo (thanksgiving) meeting at Kenge, one of the villages of the B.M. field, one Saturday & Sunday of the week after my arrival. Although the proceedings were only understood as they were interpreted to me, they were interesting to follow. Most impressive of the meeting was my first experience, at 7:00 Sunday morning, of witnessing an open-air Baptismal service, at which 52 candidates thus gave outward evidence of their desire to put on the new life, the life with Christ. At the close of the church service that day, held in an outdoor cathedral — the arches of which were the Mango trees and the walls of which were of Bamboo and Palm branches — a communion service was observed, in an inspiring & dignified manner.

But one can not continue to enjoy all these good and inspiring things, without a little hard work along with them. It seems there is one thing on which the new missionary must put some time, if he hopes to be successful in his work. The time for that had arrived—the study of the language, Kikongo. What a lot of strange sounds and words to the inexperienced ear! Yet one becomes immediately conscious of a certain rhythm in Kikongo. I feel fortunate to have found such good teachers in Lubokolo, one of the native teachers in the Central School here, and in Mary Bonar, the educational missionary at B.M. However, on the other hand, I am afraid that they did not get as good a bargain—finding a poor student of language! What patience the natives must have to endure the first attempts at faltering speech, and what facial

and emotional restraint they must have to be able to hear the mistakes made without breaking into laughter. Even when I asked Tata Malutama for a boy to bring me some "mfinda" (forest) instead of using "nkuni" (fire wood) he very calmly corrected my mistake. I suppose it is such that makes the life of fellow missionaries interesting. I am afraid if it were not for us neophytes the others would have to find some other form of facial exercise. What a gulf there is between the slowness with which the language comes to some and the desire to speak of God's eternal love and even to hold friendly conversation with these people. After repeated usage of the first and only means of greeting at first possible—a smile and the first word learned, "Kiambote" (hello or good-day)—this greeting seems to get monotonous and seems not sufficient. Hence there comes a deep yearning and desire to say more. But it seems that patience, accompanied by dilligence and practice must be the rule. With the school now in session I hope to utilize that valuable tool—hearing the language used—by visiting the classes.

Fortunately, so far, I have not had to correct any erroneous impressions of the country or its people. Perhaps this can be attributed largely to the background material received formally from Mr. MacDiarmid last winter at Kennedy School of Missions, and informally from Mrs. Mac., as they both shared freely of their many years experience in the Congo.

If one should doubt the place and worth of Christian Missions, he need only look around at the places and positions of responsibility occupied by graduates and former students of our mission; or he has only to see the work being carried on in the various dispensaries scattered over our mission territory; or notice the number of expectant mothers who come into the hospital for maternity care—an unheard of thing not too many years back; or look at the crowds of mothers who come faithfully to the baby clinics, making for a healthier and happier Africa. The coming of the boys and girls at the reopening of the Central school here, gave the station new life and vigor, brightened by the faces, games and singing of yearning Congo youth. Above all to see the way native Christian leaders are doing work that only the missionary himself was formerly able to do gives ample evidence to their intrinsic worth.

Everywhere is the same picture—surely "the fields are white unto the harvest, but the laborers are few; pray the Lord of the harvest that he will send laborers into the harvest". I am indeed happy to be here at last, confident that I am here in response to prayer, certain that the success of my work in the Congo will be determined not alone by my own effort, but by the prayers for strength, guidance and greater spiritual insight and power, on the part of fellow Christians and friends in the homeland. As I begin my work here I am ever reminded of and inspired by a passage of scripture used as the text of the service commissioning us for service in the Congo; in which Paul said: "Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision" (*Acts* 26:19).

EUGENE R. ABBOTT

"KINTWADI"

"Kintwadi" Say it again for it is a great word! There it stands in the midst of the Kikongo language, a beautiful word bursting with expression. It means "togetherness". It is so rich in meaning and so much used that our Kikongo speaking brother would be at a great loss without it.

To destroy Kintwadi, or togetherness, is to our colored brother a great evil. A church Conference was being held at our station. Some of the church leaders were inclined to be selfish about a money affair. They wished to inject their selfishness into the meetings, when one of our older and more stable leaders realized it. Calling them aside he pleaded with them not to bring such things into conference meetings, saying. "To do this will destroy our "Kintwadi", cause our conference to be a failure and we shall all go to our homes unhappy and divided. Please, do not do it."

There is social kintwadi or fellowship. A soldier came to see me yesterday. He has been serving in the army of the Belgian Congo for two years. In that time he has had many experiences, but they have not erased from his memory a certain happy event which occurred on one of my itineraries through the villages of our Mbanza Post some three years ago when he was one of my carriers. From early dawn of that day until eleven o'clock we had been traveling over a most difficult sandy and hilly country. The sun

blazed fiercely so that we could feel the heat of it rebounding from the earth over which we walked. Even the air we breathed into our lungs was warm and suffocating. Perspiration oozed out of me and my sixteen colored companions as grease boils out of frying bacon. Exhausted we threw ourselves on the ground under a large palm tree. My boy brought me a large pineapple which he had been carrying. Pineapples were very common and the woods were full of them. Nevertheless they are always welcome in the heat of a scorching day. I whittled off the outside of the pineapple and wondered how I could share it with so many. I managed to cut it into seventeen parts. Each part was very small, but as I passed each one a piece, faces brightened. Where weariness had been there were smiles. Jesting and laughter took the place of grumbling. Those few minutes under the hospitable palm tree were precious ones. Our present soldier boy who had been with me that day remembered those moments with joy. That day we had been very, very" kintwadi".

But "kintwadi" has also the meaning of united effort for the accomplishment of some purpose or task. Often a pastor has complained to me that the last four years have been lacking in "kintwadi" in the building of church centers, where we have large mud and grass chapels that will seat from eight hundred to sixteen hundred people. Previous to the war, whenever such a chapel was to be rebuilt, the pastor called in all the Christians and inquirers of his pastorate to gather at the church center. There they would remain for a week. Food was brought to them by other members of their families. Sometimes they slept under the stars near an open fire. Everyone was happy. There was laughter and singing and everyone worked with a will. Some of the men cut large sticks or poles; some cut and carried palm fronds. The women carried clay and cut and carried thatch grass. Each day saw tremendous progress. Often in five days sufficient materiels had been gathered to build a spacious chapel. An intervening week was given to allow the thatch grass to dry, and also the timber. Then for four or five days more there were happy, singing workers. In one week the church was up and ready for use. Only the finishing touches needed to be completed. Proudly the pastor would tell of the "kintwadi" shown by his peo-

ple. Hopefully, they now look forward to the post-war years when the people will not be so busy and this "kintwadi" may again be realized.

But that meaning of "kintwadi" or togetherness which holds the greatest place in the minds of our colored brother is a spiritual kintwadi with God. All of our colored brothers may not achieve this "kintwadi" but I believe that the greater number of those who have had a Christian experience desire it with a passionate longing. Many will sacrifice their own wishes and comforts for the sake of "kintwadi" in the name of our Lord. An example of this desire came to me in March of this year. A heavy schedule made it impossible for me to visit all the church posts which I had planned to visit. I chose the centrally located village of Sala to which I called the people of four church districts. The pastors and village evangelists were bitterly disappointed. Rumors spread that they had said that they would not come if I did not go to their respective posts. This I could not do, but I felt badly for I had done the best I could. Believing the rumors, I began to get ready to return to the Mission Station where an overwhelming amount of work was awaiting me. I had driven only a kilometer when I met a great crowd of people. "Kintwadi" with God had overcome personal feelings. They said to me "Tata, we have walked since early dawn. We did not want to come, but we knew that God would bless if we listened to His voice. We are here and we have God's promise in our hearts that we shall receive great blessings in our meetings together". Great blessings we had! God's great love was manifested to us. Busy days followed of Bible study and prayer and the examining of candidates for baptism. Men went out by twos to do personal work in the surrounding villages. Group prayer meetings were held among those who came. On Sunday morning one hundred and forty-seven people had been accepted for baptism. I shall never forget that glorious day when over two thousand of us descended down, down, into the valley below where a baptismal fount had been created under the green foliage of the tropical forest. Over two thousand of us stood on the slopes and witnessed three pastors as they buried in baptism that great group of new converts who had surrendered hearts and lives to our Lord Jesus Christ. Over two thousand voices lifted that grand old hymn in praise to our Heavenly Father:

"Happy Day! Happy Day, when Jesus washed my sins away." The baptism was over. Over two thousand ascended the hill to our meeting place singing triumphant hymns of praise. We were experiencing the greatest "Kintwadi" on earth, that of togetherness with God. Again at our comminion service that morning, what wonderful, beautiful moments! A great multitude was "kintwadi" with our Lord Jesus Christ!

W. F. ROBBINS

OFFERING OR COLLECTION

The recent matondo meeting at Malambu, where our latest Kimpese graduate Samuel Yilela, is developing a new post, brought forth some new ideas.

In general, the matondo or thanksgiving offering is made in the villages then, during the meeting, a collection is taken up. Possibly in some of the older and more sophisticated churches they have a more dignified routine. But out along the Kwango where the Bayaka hold forth, dignity gives way to something more enjoyable. After the reading of the offerings, village by village, the crowd begin to get restless, voices rise, feet shuffle, and the pastor appointed for the occasion rises and makes more or less appropriate remarks. Some deacons conscript some felt hats and the fun starts. The collection is taken up to the accompaniment of singing, hand clapping, and considerable confusion.

But Yilela, having had some psychology at Kimpese, had thought of a better way. He had cut a stick with a nest of branches, and this stick was placed into the ground solidly enough to hold a large pan in its branches. This was in the middle of the palm branch taberancle where the meeting was held. He cleared off the preliminaries and then explained that we were not going around with a hat asking for money. Most folk had already made thier contribution but every one enjoyed a good time so now we would make a joyful offering to the Lord on top of our regular gift.

He announced that first the children would come up, then the young people, women, teachers and elders of the church, and then whosoever would. He started the very popular song:

Oh give, give, give, your gift to God,

But first give your own hearts.
You children give in your childhood,
Give as the Lord has blessed you.
But first give your own hearts.

This refrain in carried through for each group in turn.

Among the first of the children were Yilela's own two boys, Kamosi and Buzitu, and a swell pair they are. Kamosi could reach the pan but chubby little Buzitu had to be lifted. Our monitor Thomas Zala lifed Buzitu and his coin fell with quite a clang into the pan. Immediately Zala called for quiet and order. He inquired of Buzitu, a four year old, where he had acquired the money which made such a bang in the pan. Buzitu flashed on his adorable smile and said "From Daddy". Zala then inquired of the large group of youngsters present if their daddies were present and if maybe they would like to get a coin and hear it drop into the pan. Most of them did so, and the daddies enjoyed the ruse. Cleverness is much appreciated among the Congolese.

Enthusiasm mounted, and each group came along. A few (mostly young people dressed in new clothes) made two or three trips. Then the singers sang for the chief to "give according to his chieftainship" and he did, a quite remarkable gift of 25 francs. Then the lone white man was invited to give according to his white-man-ship; and he did.

Yilela then quieted the congregation, thanked all of us, and in his prayer asked that God would use both the gifts and the hearts offered to Him that day. Yilela's new post needs everything, so the cash offering (about 250 francs) will enable him to get some tools and equipment. More than that it was, and is, my prayer that from among that group which included many promising young folk, there will be the heart and life gifts, young people that can be trained for service, who will not despise their ignorant and dirty fellow men, but who, under God's guidance, will be the means of help and blessing to their unhappy people. By one means or another we can collect workers for a limited time; but God could make glorious use of many offered lives.

B.W. ARMSTRONG.

SILVER AND GOLD HAVE I NONE

The matondo meetings at Kituengi were over. Late Sunday afternoon I sat relaxing from the strain of a large crowd, preaching out of doors, and all the work of one of these annual thanksgiving meetings out in the Sona Bata area. As I sat there I talked over the two and a half days of meetings which had just closed. My companion was Tata David Nsiata, pastor and traveling evangelist. We talked of the difficulties and of the blessings received; 30 people had confessed their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ in the waters of baptism; 7 babies had been dedicated and 1 couple had been married. The special thanksgiving offering had totaled 1600 francs (about $37.21). These blessings would not be forgotten, and the few difficulties would soon be lost in the problems and tasks of other days.

One problem, however, was bothering Tata Nsiata. At the very small village of Kimfila in the area of the Kimpongo church there was a young crippled woman. Her legs had been withered since birth and she was unable to walk at all. But this young woman had heard the message of salvation and had believed. The problem was how could she be baptized. She could not walk to the matondo meeting, and the rule is that the missionary must be present for all baptisms.

It was a difficult problem to Tata Nsiata because he knew that the missionary was traveling on foot this dry season because the Sona Bata truck had been useless for a year, and any large increase in the distance to be covered might overburden an already difficult itinerary. But in his mind's eye the missionary saw the hope of a young cripple, and to him the only problem was—What is the shortest path to Kimfila. And so the plans were made to include the village in the schedule.

Monday was spent examining over 100 boys for entrance into the regional school of that section. Early Tuesday morning the carriers were sent off on the road which led to the village where we planned to sleep that night. Originally we had expected to go right through to the church center where the next matondo was to be held, but due to the change in plans we would have to sleep one night on the

way. Tata Nsiata, the missionary, one boy to carry water and lunch, and two school teachers who were making this trip to help in the examining of children for the regional schools, started off in another direction. We would have to make a long loop in order to visit Kimfila and reach the stopping place for that night.

The region in which we were traveling had very steep hills and the walking was made much more difficult by the deep sand, often more than ankle deep. After walking 5 miles we arrived at Kimfila. We were expected and everything was ready for our brief visit. Under a large tree a table, two chairs, and some benches had been arranged for the service. On the table were three old tin cans filled with the purple flowers of the Bougainvillia bush. The old piece of dented iron which hung from a branch and served as a bell was struck several times and soon a small group of about 40 gathered for the service. The cripple was picked up, by holding under her arms, and carried to a mat on the ground near the table where Tata Nsiata and I were seated.

After the opening part of the service led by Tata Nsiata, I stood up to preach. During the opening part the message which I had prepared did not seem to be right, and I could not put out of my mind those words of Peter as he and John went up to the temple to pray and were accosted by the cripple at the gate called Beautiful. "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee". I could not make her walk, as Peter had done, but I had a message of life and hope for her and the others gathered there. What the others received I could not tell, but I myself received a real blessing from that message which God had put in my heart.

After the service Tata Nsiata and I examined the young woman as to her faith and knowlelge of the Bible and the Way of Life. Then with a woman carrying the cripple on her back, and others carrying the table and chairs, we all walked the half mile down to the small stream from which the villagers got their water supply. The cripple was carried out into shallow water in the midst of the stream and seated there in the water. Tata Nsiata waded out and stood by her as we sang "What can wash away my sin, nothing but the Blood of Jesus". Then Tata Nsiata proceeded to baptise Loba Elizabeth.

As soon as she was carried from the water we men moved away and a circle of women formed around her while she was dressed in dry clothes. While this was being done Lina Keto and her husband Mbemba who are deacon and deaconness of the Kimpongo church, prepared the table for communion. After the right hand of fellowship communion was served to about 15.

The spirit of the young cripple woman, and of the whole service made a very deep impression on everyone. Not silver and gold, but that which was beyond price was hers, and not moth nor rust nor white ants could take it away from her. Having a share in such a work is all the reward that one could ask.

ROLAND G. METZGER

VANGA EVENTS

The old adage 'better late than never' and that is just about what this amounts too. But late or not perhaps you would like to hear of some of the happenings here at Vanga during the past year. During the Easter season a lovely pageant portraying the Passion week from the Last Supper to the sealed tomb, was enacted by our native teaches and nurses. We had time for only three practices but by the time it was finished we were convinced that there were no people in the world with more natural talent for acting. Perhaps the secret is that they were not acting but living that which they felt in their hearts. We were thrilled with the results. Many of our people told us that now they understood as they had never undertood before, the meaning of God's great Gift to men. We held the pageant Friday afternoon and on Easter morning just as the sun was rising, we gathered around a great empty tomb, dug in the hillside, to worship our Risen Lord. That afternoon one of the school boys dedicated his life to full time service for that same Risen Lord whom he said had become so real to him through the Easter services. Several others gave beautiful testimonies. As we went to rest that Easter eve it was with hearts singing with joy at the assurance that Christ had risen anew within the hearts of some of our people.

The day after Easter Sunday the girls compound was closed

and on the following day Miss Dickey left for home via Leopoldville. She left tired but happy, we hope, in the knowledge that more of Congo's future mothers had been lifted nearer to the light through her efforts during the past three years. We were all happy to receive news of her safe arrival in America.

Early in May our Boys Central School completed another very sucessful year, with thirty fine young men going out to begin what we hope will prove to be their life work. This was the largest graduating class in the history of our school and a class for which we felt justly proud. We hope that the Master has great things in store for them.

With Miss Dickey's going only the Robbins and myself were left on the field. Late in May I left for our Congo Conference, preceeding the Robbins by what we hoped would be but a few days since they must first pick up their small daughter who had been attending school at Lubondai. They were leaving for home after six difficult years of faithful service. They expected to spend five or six days on the river boat and arrive in time for most of the conference. However our Kwilu River must have been nursing a secret grudge of its own for they spent the next 16 or 17 days mostly on sand-bars in the hot sun waiting for the boat to be released. We all missed them at Conference but are happy to know that they are at last on their way home to rest and friends. They have done a fine piece of work and have left both the school and the churches in fine condition.

After conference came a few short weeks at Banza Manteke where we four new Vanga-ites completed our first-year language exam thanks to the competent aid of Mary Bonar and the B.M. staff of native workers. We are all rooting for B.M. as far as language study is concerned.

And now we are back at Vanga and each trying in the best way we know to do the task the Master Teacher has set before us. We thank Him for the opportunity of serving and covet your continued prayers that through Him our efforts may not be vain to bring His Kingdom in.

DOROTHY WISEMAN

EACH HIS SHARE

People come and people go but Bonar and Ehnbom stay on forever. Banza Manteke has become the center for language study, it seems. We have had the joy and privilege of entertaining quite a number of new missionaries. Probably they do not consider it a joy to study the intricacies of the beautiful Congo language but they count it a privilege, nevertheless. We are the ones who count it a joy to have been able to fellowship with them.

First came Phyllis Benner, later she left for Leopoldville then came Mr. and Mrs. Jump who later left for Vanga, then Doris and Dorothy Wiseman who also left for Vanga. Now Mr. Abbott is here and as soon as he has mastered some of it, he will go elsewhere. Our Natives say, "Why can't the missionaries stay with us."

Miss Bonar has been exeedingly busy with the oversight of the station and all its problems, the oversight of the schools, etc. The standard of the village, regional and station schools is being raised considerably. All the pupils have been examined and have been put in classes according to their ability. There are over one thousand at present in these schools. A rigid program was adopted and the teachers were here for special instruction. These schools are taught by fine Christian boys who have finished the station school or Kimpese or are doing their last year of practise teaching before receiving their diplomas.

This year a precedent was started that will prove a great blessing to the villages. Every boy from the station school was required to teach three months of his vacation. Before returning his card had to be signed by the pastor and another christian in the village.

Miss Bonar visited several of the regional conferences. She was assisted by Tata Malutama whom all should know. He is a man of outstanding ability. In spite of his advanced age he is strong in body, and is tireless in assumng a large responsibility for the work of the station and field. We could not do without him. His, wife Mama Hanna, is a fitting complement to him. Their home is a beautiful one. Their son, Remy Malutama, a man of keen intellect and musical ability, was chosen Chairman of the Student Council at

Kimpese. He realizes the responsibility connected with the task and said "It is too big for me. Pray for me."

Benjamin Tonwanga, our Jeannes teacher of the regional schools, and keeper of church records has taken his share of responsibility. Paul Nloko, doing the same work in the village schools, has also done an unusual work.

The medical work with the hospital, leper colony, five baby clinics and seven dispensaries is going forward reaching thousands. Lutete Hezekiah, who has already given over twenty five years of unusual service is the head nurse. He, as well as the nurses in charge of the dispensaries, are graduates of the Sona Bata Medical School. Lutete Makima who has given nearly twenty years of service although not a Sona Bata graduate, is in charge of statistics. For neatness and accuracy he is unusual. It is his wife whose picture appears with the baby on Miss Shank's pamphlet. "I sat where they sat." There is our hospital overseer doing general supervision, Mboko, who is in charge of the lepers. There is Neli Tusama who has the task of medical supervision of the girls, the care of obstetrical cases and baby clinic. We are thankful for every one of them and for the large part they play.

Never shall I forget the picture in my mind of the opening of a dispensary at Lukunga. Patients were there awaiting the opening. Already the buildings are not large enough for the many who come. What the nurses accomplish is unbelievable.

There will be great rejoicing when the Engwalls return.

We praise God for His goodness in giving us such faithful workers. We thank Him for what has been accomplished and we know that in our natives is a constant upward and onward reach to victory through Christ.

ESTHER EHNBOM

FROM THE FREDERICKSONS' DIARIES — CONTINUED

(Mr. & Mrs. Frederickson were missionaries in Congo from 1881 to 1921)

January 1905. All of us attended the Protestant Missionary Conference at Kinshasa. Fred and I called on the director and the judge at Leopoldville and had friendly and helpful visits. Fourteen missionaries, including Lila and me, went to Ikoko on the "S.S. Livingstone". Our health needed a change after four years of hard work, and we refused to

go on furlough. The Bains and Fred returned to Kifwa. Lila and I shared a cabin with Dr. Catherine Mabie, and a sweet friendship sprang up between us, which has been very helpful to me all these years.

January 27th.— We reached Ikoko. Mrs Clark and Mrs. Metzger met us with every person on the station whose glad voices told us how pleased they all were to see us. Many people in these villages wear less clothes than those on the Lower Congo, but then, they use more rouge and other colors on their bodies. The men carry bows, knives, spears and arrows. About three hundred came to the service on Sunday. It is a treat to hear the school boys and girls sing with good voices, also a quartet. Both Mr. and Mrs. Clark and Mr. and Mrs. Metzger are fine singers; what a gift to use to God's glory among these people who love so to sing.

Our mission steamer "Henry Reed" is twenty-one years old, it was paddled by the boys and girls to a place for repair. Monday, we walked to the chief's house, he was dying I saw one of his wives come out, carrying a soup plate full of blood, the witchdoctor had done his worst. The next night, just before he died. the chief's body was bent in a sitting position, the knees under the chin — as chiefs are prepared in Congo — then they wrapped him in cloth. The men are dancing in front of his house where the women mourners are sitting close to the Chief's body. In the night, the witchdoctor wailed loudly the monotonous tones to the Chief. There may be months before he is buried.

A letter from Mr. Bain told of the illness and death of their darling wee baby at Kifwa. What a grief to the parents, now alone and no doctor near. The precious little body was laid in her coffin, and all the people and school children passed by for a last look before she was laid away. How I wished that I could have been there.

February 10th--Ikoko rejoiced again for the steamer "Goodwill" of the English Baptist Mission, arrived. Mr. Howell, the missionary Captain and his wife, were onboard and also my husband.

A True Fish Story- (Mrs. Frederickson writes "I have copied Fred's description of part of this interesting trip") quote: —

"We left Bololo Station this morning having said goodbye to our English Baptist friends. One of their mission-

aries, Mr. Murdock, came with us. He has only been out eighteen months. He is going some thirty miles up river to a place named Yumbi, to preach; and then return by land. When we reached Yumbi, he went into his boat with his black crew and then said goodbye to us and we steamed across to the North bank to obtain some firewood from some woodcutters.

We saw from the steamer, one day, a crocodile on the sandbank, asleep. Mr. Howell fired and killed it, this crocodile will eat no more people. Three fine geese are walking on an island, they are black with white necks; how proud they looked as they stretched their long necks to see what passed by!

Mr. Howell promised to take me out to fish on a sandbank and to see how smart his men are at fishing. We came up to some nice banks at 3 o'clock that afternoon. We made the steamer fast near one bank and then put off in the canoe with five fisherman. I helped them paddle the canoe. Coming around a little bushy island, the head fisherman made signs to me that I should stop paddling. I was making too much noise and would frighten the fish away. We came into shallow water, the men pointed and said: "Do you see the water move? That is a crocodile, we will catch it in the net." Two men took hold of one end of the net and jumped into the water which reached to their waists. One man guided the net, lowering it into the water; when the whole net was out, two more men went in. Mr. Howell and I took off our shoes and socks and brought the canoe to a sandbank, while the men hauled the net along. I stood on the sandbank with a big stick in one hand, when I heard a shout. "Oh, we have the crocodile in the net." The crocodile made a great noise in the water, trying to get out. As the net came nearer land and the shallow water, the crocodile became more and more uneasy, took some big jumps, making the water go high into the air. The fishermen now went for him, two took hold of his tail, and the other rushed for his body, but he was too strong for them and, making a big splash, the crocodile broke the net, and the men who held the tail lost their grip; the crocodile then rose out of the water, standing on his hind legs, looked around at us, bewildered, but the men grabbed his tail again

and one struck him on the head with his paddle, but he got away from them. He was at least ten feet long.

"Then the net was set once more and when it fell into shallow water, there was a great splash; the men said! "A crocodile again, we are not going to lose this one." All rushed on top of him and held him fast to the bottom; but when they hauled ashore, it proved to be a great fish. It was the only fish we got."

April 4th——We left Ikoko where we had received so much kindness from all, and with renewed health we returned to Kifwa where Mr. and Mrs. Bain were alone with the work.

At our conference at Leopoldville, Rev. P.A.MacDiarmid was designated to our Sona Bata field. He will be greatly used of God in this great work.

(to be continued in later issues)

"WHERE IS THY GOD"

David must have felt somewhat as God's servants do at times when he wrote, "As with a sword in my bones mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, 'Where is thy God'?" Strong forces of evil,—fetishism, witchcraft in their darkest, most enslaving forms that always go hand in hand with persistent, stubborn ignorance; tribal enmities and jealousies, — how these with all their tragic and hideous offspring throw the words into the face of the church of Christ. We have felt it so keenly at Moanza for a long time and especially so since the local church has had little but the characteristically evasive native answer to give, "O - ho, how should we know? It has had no victorious response to the challenge because it has deliberately harbored gross sins and disobeyed the Light they have received. No wonder they lost the sense of His nearness and power to save, deliver and keep. Thank God, He is answering prayer and some of them know again the truth of His gracious Word, "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." Know it because the love of Christ is reaching out for them and they are commencing to witness to the fact that even tho they thot they could persist in hiding sin, they found the convicting power of the Holy Spirit broke down their re-

sistance.

When we returned from Conference in June with the way closed for the immediate furlough, which was due, we prayed definitely and earnestly that God might be able to use us to help bring about the needed blessing upon the work. One great fact had stood out robbing the thot of furlough of some of its anticipated joy,—our local church at Moanza had refused to walk in obedience to God's Word and so had lost their joy and testimony. True, God had put His stamp of approval on some of our work but the depths of blessing, for which our hearts cried, had not come. During the first few weeks after our return the skies seemed leaden. One problem after another arose in every department of the work. A group of stubborn workmen had to be discharged; problems arose with the teaching staff; the head infirmier grew listless and careless, claiming to be sick. He refused our offer to take him to Vanga for the doctor to give him a good examination, saying that it would do no good since he needed an X-Ray. (The X-Ray and treatment of the Holy Spirit have since been wonderfully effective!) As these difficulties grew, our evening prayers together as a staff would often end with the burden and deep conviction that only a new demonstration of the quickening Spirit of God could bring about the needed change and attitudes. Dependent as we are constantly upon Him this was a particular situation of deep urgency.

The Word is the Sword of the Spirit and we felt it to be so as the message was given the last Sunday in August from *Luke* 11:21-27, 29-32. The next Wednesday evening, late, the infirmier came "to talk" in private and finally blurted out his hidden sin of adultery and how he had wept and prayed the Lord to forgive him and restore his peace without confessing it before anyone else. Nearly three years ago, during a vacation visit in another area, a former teacher had scoffed at the foundation truth of the resurrection. Insidiously; the devil had thus sown seeds of unbelief in the mind of the infirmier and he had lost touch with Christ, finally yielding in an hour of temptation. Dangerous business,- to tamper with God's Word. The next Sunday, the Spirit again blessed the Word, the message of the barren fig tree. But there was no

break. On Monday evening, the infirmier came to us both and told how he had been fighting and resisting the Spirit's voice that, as a leader, he must make his confession before the church. We prayed and wept together that God might be honored and find a way to convict others of sin thru his humiliation. At morning prayers the next day, he won his victory, made his confession and asked forgiveness from his fellowmen. It was a very sober and quiet group that listened but no yielding among them. School opened the next week with special services held during chapel hour and in the evenings. After a week of these meetings, the first after-service was called for, with separated groups for men and women. Some twenty-five remained, mostly school boys aud teachers. A lad of about fourteen was the first to respond in a prayer of confession. During vacation he had sought work to earn tuition money and then had been tempted to leave school just for material gain. A host of other temptations had followed and he realized how close he had come to falling. He prayed for forgiveness and grace that never again would he turn from the Lord's will. Another school boy told how happy he had been during the first weeks of vacation and then, growing careless, had listened to the tauntings of the boys and had drunk palm wine. Feeling that his testimony was gone he had also joined in the obscene dances. A village teacher, in for refresher study, found his heart searched, sought forgiveness and promised to return money taken from village offerings. The prayer-confessions continued for a long time with the very real sense that *God was there* and that they were dealing with *Him*. Similar meetings went on for several days, with His attendant blessing and cleansing.

As is always true, when the Spirit of God has a chance to work, He convicted of some sins that had never been specifically mentioned at all by preacher or teacher. One lad had robbed some little children of field rats they had caught and left them crying. A teacher confessed to unhappiness in his home because he had taken some of his wife's money to pay his debts. Another was convicted because he had broken his vow made when he was a young christian, that he would not marry an illiterate girl, and now there was difficulty because he has felt called to go to

Kimpese for further training. The native pastor confessed to having taken communion month by month while holding a bitter grudge against us, and asked for forgiveness. Many were convicted of cursing.

As the days passed, we sought to lead them to the assurance of cleansing thru His Blood and to the place of praise and testimony. It was evident that they needed to straighten out some things in their villages before God could fully bless them, so on a Friday further definite teaching was given on restitution and the boys were allowed to go for that purpose. Many eagerly accepted and hurried off without waiting for breakfast. Several village teachers and pastors have written telling of the help and blessing resulting from these visits and expressing their yearning that the power of God might be felt in the district too.

God has indeed shown that HE IS and that HE does answer prayer. We praise Him with all our hearts. However there is much, very much, that only continued intercession and the convicting, wooing, enabling Spirit of God can overcome. While there have been significant moves among some of the men and women to get right with God and others yet we know they are evading some issues in their home and shielding sins of others. How easy it is to try to bargain with the conscience by stepping out into partial light and reserving the inner recesses of the heart. Because of this few of the homes have the basis for fellowship and happiness together. Petty quarrels, deceits, and suspicions eat as cancers. Pray with us and for us as we seek thru personal conferences, prayer, and patient teachsng of His Word to lead them to the Lord Jesus who can deliver them from every bondage and cause the church to be victorious and soulwinning in its witness. "Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus"

LEWIS & SUSIE BROWN

* * *

"Down in the human heart,
Crushed by the tempter,
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore;
Touched by a loving heart,
Wakened by kindness,
Chords that are broken will vibrate once more."

STATION NEWS

NEWS NOTES FROM KIKONGO

In spite of sketchy supervision we have some new buildings ready for use. Two new dormitories for girls have been built in permanent materials and are now occupied. The girls are happy that it will no longer be necessary for them to run to the open kitchen when a storm blows up, as they did when occupying the old mud buildings during the last few months. Three personnel houses in sun dried brick are just about ready for use. They will be for medical helpers or school teachers. The iron from the old buildings at Matadi has been used up and we now have to thatch these semi-permanent houses.

During the past year the Kinkosi church center has been rebuilt. The job has been well done although the new buildings are of native materials. The Kinkosi matondo meetings will be held from August 23 to the 26th, at which time the new church will be dedicated. It would be nice if conditions were such that we could have representatives from other stations with us for such occasions. We think our pastor at Kinkosi, Louis Nawela, has done a fine job.

Another job of which we are proud is still being done by Thomas Zala, one of our Kimpese graduates who is a permanent member of the central school teaching staff. His home church at Kasansi is going through a very trying time. The church building was a very dilapidated affair and we think it represented the spiritual condition of the members. Zala spent his whole vacation there, getting a new building up. It is a good job, also built of native materials. He has faced some very trying experiences and we believe that he will be a better teacher for having faced up to and overcome so many of the problems in his home town church. He has not returned to the station as these notes are being written,

but will soon be back. His last word was that he regrets that he can not stay right on and do the whole compound, i.e. pastor's house, regional school class rooms and dormitories, and a small house for us when we visit the church. All the station monitors had field work for the dry season. Some of them did an acceptable job and some know how to write good reports.

Students for both the central and preparatory schools have arrived. The month of August will be spent in making gardens, repairing all school buildings, building a new dormitory for boys, and a new class room, and in getting materials ready for opening school in September. In spite of restricted enrolment, and many applicants turned away, we have more students than ever. It is a tough job to refuse entrance to so many youngsters, but it can not be helped under present conditions.

We are glad for the increased number in the girls' boarding school, especially for those who have come from the Bayaka tribe. I am sure that one reason for this increase is the good school for girls that Grace Cooper had last year; they really expect to make progress now.

This year our matondo meetings will extend into September. We had a late start and during August we can hold meetings only in the churches that are comparatively close to Kikongo. So far the meetings have not been remarkable, offerings are about normal, attendance poor, and the candidates for baptism less numerous but perhaps a bit better prepared than formerly.

The infirmiers are carrying on the medical work for the present with a bare minimum of help from the missionaries. We shall be glad when some one comes who can take charge of the hospital.

B.W. ARMSTRONG

SONA BATA NEWS

Once upon a time there were 14 missionaries on the staff of Sona Bata. This past dry season there have been three, and one was out in the district itinerating most of the time.

Miss Satterberg, our nurse, left the latter part of June to return to America for a much needed furlough which was two years over-due. In the middle of July Dr. Osterholm moved to Vanga to take up the medical work for the three

Kwango area stations, which had been without a doctor for nearly a year since the illness of Dr. Freas had necessitated his return to America.

Sona Bata hoped for the arrival of Dr. and Mrs. Tuttle by the end of July. It is now October, and they have not yet arrived. War time shipping difficulties are still playing havoc with missionary travel.

The hospital and medical work has been carried on and is being carried on by Miss Jennings, a pharmacist, loaned to us by the British Baptist Mission. Mr. and Mrs. Metzger have tried to keep the Educational as well as the Evangelistic work going.

Among the visitors at Sona Bata during the past dry season have been Mr. and Mrs. E. Carlson and daughter of the Swedish Baptist Mission, Miss Trixie Broom of the Congo Balolo Mission, Mrs. and Mrs. E. Hess of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, and Dr. and Mrs. Jean Comhaire of the Belgian Bureau of Information and Propaganda. We were also delighted to welcome Mr. Eugene Abbott, our new missionary, who is now studying Kikongo at Banza Manteke but whom we hope will be coming soon to help us here at Sona Bata.

LILLIAN & ROLAND METZGER

VANGA NEWS

The central school opened Sept. 3 with an enrollment of 225 students. Seven of these are girls who have completed the work in the girls' school. A class of 91 new students entered this year. The school is running smoothly thanks to the fine way in which it was organized by Mrs. Freas and Mrs. Robbins, and the splendid work and consecration of our three head teachers, who are all Kimpese graduates. We also have a fine staff of younger teachers. The girls' school opened with an enrollment of 115. Here too, much credit is due to the efforts of Miss Dickey and Kisaka, the teacher in charge. Miss Wiseman has stepped into the work and is doing a great deal for the girls. The girls spend their mornings in the garden and sewing class, and their afternoons in school.

The Sunday school has been following approximately the same program as last year. A Junior Sunday school in charge

of Dorothy Wiseman has been organized. This is in addition to the Junior church which is held during the regular Sunday service. The girls' Sunday School is in charge of Doris Wiseman, the boys' in charge of Dr. Osterholm and Chester Jump, and the women's class in charge of Margaret Jump. Vespers are held Sunday evening for the boys and girls. The young folks themselves take charge of these meetings as well as their prayer meetings.

Plans are being made for an evangelistic trip to all the Vanga posts during October and November. At that time we hope to launch a program of study for the women. We are preparing lessons to be used at monthly meetings at the posts and weekly meetings in the villages. We are centering the lessons around the book "Banengwa ba Bibila" (Women of the Bible).

Under Dr. Osterholm and Dorothy Wiseman, the medical work is rapidly reaching its normal proportions. Dr. Osterholm made one medical trip to Moanza and is planning one to Kikongo this month. The hospital here is full most of the time. Examination of school students is also under way.

So Vanga has settled down to work despite the fact that four-fifths of its staff members are 'new' missionaries. Thanks to the fine work of last year's staff, the guiding hand of Dr. Osterholm, the native leadership, and above all Divine help and guidance, we feel that this year too, will see further advances in the Lord. We hope to be able to give you more concrete evidence of these advances in a short time. We do know now, that the Spirit of the Lord is working among these people here. They are eager to go forward in the knowledge and love of Christ Jesus. Pray for the Vanga staff that we may lead them wisely.

MARGARET JUMP

LEOPOLDVILLE NEWS

The annual Matondo services (Thanksgiving) were held on September the first and second. On Saturday, the first, the women met and the two who attended the summer sessions at Kimpese reported on some of their work and inspiration there. On Sunday, the second, the meetings were begun, very appropriately, with a baptismal service in the Congo River. We all reassembled later in the church

for a joint service of the Bangala and Kikongo churches in which there were special speakers and special music. In the afternoon a pageant was presented by the school.

On October 10, after a brief breathing spell of two and a half weeks, the school reopened again to begin its 1945—1946 sessions. For the first time in the history of the school girls entered classes with the boys. Hitherto classes for the girls have extended only as far as the equivalent of premier degré, deuxième année. Four girls entered the deuxième degré this year in the classes with the boys to continue their schooling and training as Christian workers and leaders. With their entrance into the main school it was seen more clearly how important it is to raise the standards of the girls' school. Now both girls and boys are following the same program with manuel labor and handwork adjusted to their special needs. For a long time it has been recognized that, if the girls and women are to learn, it must come through the efforts of the native women themselves. We have two women teachers in the school. And this year the girls entering the deuxième degré are taking over a part of the work of teaching in the lower classes of the girls' school. There, under supervision, and with constant help and encouragement, they will begin to put into practice what they themselves have been learning in school. With these new steps forward we look for a year of increased service in Leopoldville Ouest.

PHYLLIS L. BENNER

KIKONGO NEWS NOTES

We have just closed our series of matondo meetings. Three were held among the Bayaka churches and three among the Bambala-Bahungana-Bangongo groups. We had a total of fifty-five baptized and the offerings were about twelve thousand francs. Attendance was not large, and a new type of program seems to be called for to revive interest in large gatherings. We need four new pastors right now, and this year we have only one student at Kimpese.

One only of our present church centers can not be reached by automobile and a new road is being made now which will go very near or possibly directly to that one.

This year for the first time in the Kikongo field we

have a Kimpese man at one of the regional schools. In a recent letter he tells of organizing a catechumen class among the school boys. He invited the village people as well, but did not have as good response from them as he did in the school. He is doing personal, house to house visitation in the village and we look for good results. He is also organizing the school to include girls. Our people still do not see why girls need to know more than how to pound flour and nurse babies but some of the girls themselves will probably make a fuss, and then will get to go to school.

Classes are in full swing at the station too, after a month of work by the students during which the boys and the teachers did a good job on buildings and in the fields. We are very short on qualified teachers, but by making use of the students in the top class we are making out.

Building work is going on with two new personnel houses finished in sun-dried brick. This morning I staked out six more. Our old mason who is a slow-poke said, "I will start this work, but probably my son will have to finish it." We hope it will not take that long, for we have a lot of other buildings that are needed soon. We have a huge pile of brick clay on hand now dug out while the river is low. The first really heavy rains inundate the place.

Lumber production has bogged down until we can get our old pit saws re-toothed or find some new ones.

The outstation baby clinics are held every week. Of course the native population have developed the habit of waiting until the car comes along, and then suddenly becoming so ill that it is impossible to walk, but very necessary to take a trip in to Kikongo. At times we would like to have the wisdom of a Solomon, or else a lie detector. It is always a big day in the life of both mother and child when the third birthday is reached and the child goes out of the clinic, clad in a new dress or shirt.

The hospital has been full to overflowing, even though we have no nurse at present in charge. It has been a heavy responsibility for Rhoda. The infirmiers are doing an excellent job, and have a fine spirit. A child was brought in with smallpox and died here a few days later. It gave us some anxious days but no new cases have developed, for which we are thankful. The Foreami doctor in charge of this district sent vaccine

enough for the whole Kikongo population. We have had many serious cases this past month, and could easily keep both a doctor and a nurse busy.

B. W. ARMSTRONG

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We are glad that Lillian Metzger is making excellent recovery after the trying time she has gone thru. Their baby boy was still-born on November 2. Roland and Lillian have the loving sympathy of all their colleagues and friends.

* * *

After waiting many months for Dr. Tuttle it seems hard to realize that he is again with us on the field and already hard at work at Sona Bata. He arrived in Leopoldville by plane November 7th. A hearty welcome back Glen and our wish is that your family will join you in the very near future.

* * *

Rev. & Mrs. Newberry and Dr. & Mrs. Brebner-Smith, of the British Baptist Mission, were given an enthusiastic welcome by the natives when they arrived at Tondo. By the coming of Dr. & Mrs. Brebner-Smith the Doctors Russell are released for a long over-due furlough. We wish them and little Lucy God's speed on their journey and a restful and happy furlough with their families and friends.

CONGO MISSION DIRECTORY

Listed in order of arrival on field or at station — present term

BANZA MANTEKE

Miss Mary Bonar
Miss Esther Ehnbom
Rev. E. R. Abbott

MOANZA

Rev. and Mrs. L. A. Brown
Miss Alice Jorgenson
Miss Eva Shepard

TONDO

Miss Marguerite Eldredge
Dr. and Mrs. A. J. B. Russell (B.M.S.)
Miss P. Russell (B.M.S.)

LEOPOLDVILLE

Mr. and Mrs. H. J. Watkins
Rev. Phyllis Benner

KIKONGO

Rev. and Mrs. B. W. Armstrong

VANGA

Miss Dorothy Wiseman
Dr. A. C. Osterholm
Miss Doris Wiseman
Rev. and Mrs. C. Jump

KIMPESE

Rev. and Mrs. E. G. Hall
Rev. and Mrs. H. Erickson

SONA BATA

Rev. and Mrs. R. Metzger
Miss Muriel Jennings (B.M.S.)
Dr. G. W. Tuttle

ON FURLOUGH OR EN ROUTE

Rev. and Mrs. E. Atkins
Miss Mildred Tice
Mrs. A. C. Osterholm
Rev. and Mrs .C. E. Smith
Mrs. G. W. Tuttle
Miss Lena Youngsman
Miss Vendla Anderson
Rev. and Mrs. H. D. Brown
Dr. and Mrs. H. M. Freas
Rev. and Mrs. M. S. Engwall
Miss Ruth Dickey
Miss Agnes Anderson
Miss Emily Satterberg
Miss Grace Cooper
Rev. and Mrs. W. F. Robbins